

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 220331

EXDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: CI, PFOR, MILI

SUBJECT: CHILEAN REQUESTS FOR ARMS ASSISTANCE

REF: SANTIAGO 5805

1. DEPARTMENT APPRECIATES FRUSTRATION AND INCREASING ANXIETY CHILEAN MILITARY MUST FEEL OVER OBVIOUS DISPARITY IN RELATIVE FORCE STRENGTHS WITH PERU AND THEIR OWN INABILITY TO PROCURE EXPEDITIOUSLY MINIMAL DETERRENT CAPABILITY AGAINST POSSIBLE PERUVIAN AGGRESSION. THIS ISSUE AND VARIOUS CHILEAN REQUESTS FOR ARMS, AS YOU KNOW, HAVE BEEN UNDER INTENSIVE REVIEW BY INTERESTED WASHINGTON AGENCIES. THIS REVIEW HAS BEEN TAKEN IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE CHILE-PERU CONTINGENCY PLAN AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH CHILEAN AND PERUVIAN ARMS REQUESTS. THESE PAPERS ARE NOW IN THE PROCESS OF COMPLETION.

2. YOU ARE AUTHORIZED TO CONVEY TO THE GOC AT THE APPRO-
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PRIATE LEVEL AND IN A MANNER YOU DEEM MOST APPROPRIATE THE FOLLOWING USG RESPONSE TO THE VIEWS EXPRESSED DURING THE VISIT OF GENERAL MABRY: THE USG CONTINUES TO GIVE ITS MOST URGENT AND SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION TO VARIOUS PENDING GOC REQUESTS FOR THE PURCHASE OF ARMS. WE ARE FULLY AWARE OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH HAVE PROMPTED THE CHILEAN ARMED FORCES TO MAKE THESE REQUESTS. THE CHILEAN AUTHORITIES ARE, OF COURSE, ALSO AWARE OF OUR OWN MATERIEL SHORTAGES,

THE COMPETING PRIORITIES OF OTHER AREAS, AND THE DIFFICULTIES WE FACE FROM MEDIA AND CONGRESSIONAL CRITICS. DESPITE THESE PROBLEMS, THE USG WILL HONOR ITS COMMITMENTS TO THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT AND IS IN THE PROCESS OF COMPLETING ACTION ON VARIOUS PENDING CHILEAN ARMS REQUESTS IN A MANNER WHICH WE BELIEVE CAN PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE DETERRENT CAPABILITY. WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT A FAVORABLE RESPONSE ON CHILE'S MOST RECENT REQUESTS FOR MEDIUM TANKS (READ M-48) AND TRACKED VEHICLES WILL BE FORTHCOMING WITHIN 30 DAYS. WE ARE OPTIMISTIC THAT A FAVORABLE DETERMINATION WILL BE FORTHCOMING WITHIN 60 DAYS ON CHILE'S REQUEST FOR THE EXPEDITIOUS DELIVERY OF A LIMITED NUMBER OF THE TOW ANTI-TANK SYSTEM. WE ARE, IN SHORT, DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO MEET IN SUBSTANTIAL MEASURE WHAT WE REGARD TO BE THE CRITICAL AND URGENT NEEDS OF THE CHILEAN ARMED FORCES.

3. YOU MAY FURTHER STATE THAT THE USG IS FULLY COGNIZANT OF ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO HELP PRESERVE PEACE AND STABILITY IN THIS HEMISPHERE. OUR FUNDAMENTAL OBJECTIVE IN THIS CONTEXT IS TO WORK TOWARD THE REDUCTION OF EXISTING RISKS TO REGIONAL STABILITY.

4. AS YOU KNOW, THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE HAS AROUSED STRONG CONGRESSIONAL CRITICISM TO MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO CHILE. CRITICS IN THE HOUSE AND IN THE SENATE WILL SEEK TO CUT OFF ALL MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO CHILE AND RESTRICTIONS MAY ALSO BE SOUGHT TO CASH SALES. EVEN SUCH A STRONG SUPPORTER OF U.S. LATIN AMERICAN POLICY AS SENATOR MCGEE HAS SPONSORED AN AMENDMENT TO REDUCE MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO CHILE TO NO MORE THAN DOLS 10 MILLION IN FY 1975. IT IS THEREFORE OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE THAT ANY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS AREA IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE AND

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ESPECIALLY DURING THE CITED TIME FRAME SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE OF A POSITIVE NATURE. THE GOC SHOULD CLEARLY UNDERSTAND THIS REALITY.

5. YOU SHOULD ADD THAT WE APPRECIATE THE GOC'S DISCRETION TO DATE IN HANDLING ITS MILITARY PURCHASE TRANSACTIONS WITH THE USG. CONTINUED DISCRETION IN THESE MATTERS WOULD

BE MOST HELPFUL. KISSINGER

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